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SUBJECT: CODEL PRICE'S MACEDONIA MEETINGS

#### Summary

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11. (SBU) CODEL Price visited Macedonia March 15 to 18. CODEL members met with parliamentary leaders to advise on effective parliamentary procedures. The CODEL also met with President Crvenkovski, Prime Minister Gruevski, Foreign Minister Milososki, and Defense Minister Elenovski to discuss Macedonia's NATO prospects, the status of the name negotiation with Greece, and Macedonia's intention to recognize Kosovo independence. Crvenkovski and Gruevski both said that Macedonia had met NATO membership requirements and that the GOM remained willing to reach a compromise with Greece on the name. Crvenkovski said that Macedonia would follow NATO and the EU on Kosovo recognition, while Gruevski indicated that Kosovo recognition would come after the process of demarcating the border with Kosovo began. End summary.

#### CODEL Participants

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12. (U) Hon David Price, HDAC Chairman (D-NC)  
Hon David Dreier, Ranking Republican Member (R-CA)  
Hon. Lois Capps (D-CA)  
Hon. Judy Biggert (R-IL)  
Hon. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)  
Hon. Earl Pomeroy (D-ND)  
Hon. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

#### Supporting A More Effective Parliament

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13. (U) In their meetings with the Macedonian parliamentarians, the CODEL members provided advice on three main areas: constituent outreach and communication, parliamentary committee work and oversight, and women parliamentary leadership and the work of parliamentary caucuses. The Members of Congress and the Congressional Staff shared their experience and practical ideas in each of these areas. The participants also discussed how to implement a legislative strategy, including the drafting, lobbying and monitoring of legislation. The discussions were well received by local MPs and their staffs.

#### NATO Membership And The Name Negotiation

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14. (SBU) The CODEL members met with President Crvenkovski and with Prime Minister Gruevski and Foreign Minister Milososki, and Defense Minister Elenovski on March 18. All

Macedonian interlocutors stressed the importance of NATO membership for Macedonia, and their desire to reach a solution with Greece on Macedonia's name before the upcoming NATO summit. Crvenkovski said that the GOM remained willing to reach a compromise on a name for international use, but could not accept any proposal that would destabilize the country by undermining the national identity of its citizens.

Gruevski complained that Greece was "misusing" its NATO membership to "blackmail" Macedonia, while the other allies, except for the U.S., were tacitly accepting Greece's behavior.

15. (SBU) Representative Dreier asked Gruevski what he expected would happen in Macedonia if the name issue prevented Macedonia from receiving a NATO invitation. Gruevski said that there would be great anger and frustration among Macedonians and that regional radical elements would be emboldened, but that Macedonia would still succeed in moving forward. Milososki said that NATO membership for Croatia, Albania and Macedonia would support regional stability and added: "the more Balkan countries in NATO, the less NATO in the Balkans; the less NATO in the Balkans, the more NATO in Afghanistan."

#### Kosovo Status - Recognition Timing

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16. (SBU) On Kosovo status, Crvenkovski said that Macedonia would follow the common NATO and EU position on recognition, but noted that there was no common position so far. Skopje, according to Crvenkovski, had to try to balance relations between Pristina and Belgrade, and would make decisions based on its interest in maintaining that balance. Crvenkovski also expressed concern about developments in northern Kosovo, which he said appeared to be amounting to de facto partition.

Gruevski expressed hope that Macedonia-Kosovo border

SKOPJE 00000231 002 OF 002

demarcation would start soon. He did not want "a technical issue to become a political one." Once the demarcation process began, Gruevski said, Macedonia "could be more helpful on recognition of Kosovo."

#### Relations With Russia

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17. (SBU) Schiff asked Crvenkovski about Macedonia's relations with Russia. Crvenkovski said Skopje did not feel pressure from Moscow. Russia had economic interests in Macedonia and the region, but lacked political-military clout. Crvenkovski added that Skopje did not fear an adverse reaction from Moscow if Macedonia received a NATO invitation at the Bucharest summit.

#### Progress on Gender Balance in Politics

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18. (U) Capps noted the progress Macedonia has made in increasing representation of women in parliament. Crvenkovski said that the GOM was proud of that progress, which was due in part to strong civil society involvement in gender issues. Gruevski noted that Macedonia has strong representation of women in the executive branch, with three important cabinet posts filled by women: the Minister of Interior, Minister of Economy, and Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration.

19. (U) CODEL Price has cleared on this cable.  
MILOVANOVIC